

BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 23rd September 2025 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

Cllr. P. Crozier	Chair of the Committee
Cllr. P. Dennis	Cllr. B. Lamb
Cllr. V. Grose	Cllr. R. Maycock
Cllr. C. Shaw	

233. Apologies

Cllr. R. Leithall sent his apologies. Accepted by the Committee.

234. Declaration of Interest

None.

235. Notification of items for information at the discretion of the Chair. No action can be taken on these items

Cllr. Lamb noted that every year, the Council reviews its current expertise, but the Council needs to compile a list of desired capital items for future projects. Examples included:

- Resurfacing of the car park at Pilgrim Drive
- Replacement of benches
- Purchase of a larger mower
- Installation of new field gates for both Bere Alston and Bere Ferrers recreation parks
- Purchase of a projector for use in the Parish Hall during meetings

He asked all members to bring to the next Committee ideas, in order that the Committee can then prioritise items for the next few years. Cllr. Crozier agreed, highlighting in particular the importance of including the new Pavilion.

Cllr. Dennis reported that the Contractor, who had commenced work on the Parish Hall earlier that day, discovered an issue with removing and fitting the new fascia boards, as the roof slates are nailed directly to them.

The Contractor recommended the following solution:

- Remove all rotten fascia boards.
- Leave fascia boards in good condition in place.
- Fit new fascia boards over and fix them to the existing sound boards (cladding).

This method avoids the need for a roofer to remove and refit the slates, preventing delays to the fascia replacement. The Contractor confirmed that the cladding would be watertight and fully protect the fascia boards that are in good condition.

It was also noted that a downpipe requires replacement. Given the urgency, Cllr. Dennis authorised the Contractor to proceed with both the fascia cladding and the downpipe replacement.

Cllr. Lamb thanked Cllr. Grose for organising two recent public meetings. Cllr. Grose reported that they are considering arranging a future meeting at the Primary School. She has spoken with the Head Teacher, and a questionnaire will be circulated to gauge interest in holding such a meeting.

236. Matters arising from the meeting held on the 22nd July 2025

The minutes have been adopted and approved at the Full Council meeting held on 29th July 2025

Matters Arising

Minute 178

Update from West Devon Borough Council on the Electric Car Charging Points, Pilgrim Drive; the leases have now been signed. They will notify the Parish Council once the installation team schedule the installation at Pilgrim Drive.

Minute 184

Cllr. Lamb will provide an update on the planning application for the new Pavilion at the Full Council meeting scheduled for 30th September 2025.

Minute 185

It was noted that the Council's solicitors are still awaiting a response from the owners' solicitors regarding the transfer of land at Bedford Villas. The owner has been informed.

Minute 191

Cllr. Dennis will provide an update on Geoffrey Cox MP's visit to the Youth Club on 4th August at the Full Council meeting on 30th September 2025, under Notification of items for information.

The MP's open surgery will also take place that day, had been well attended by residents.

Cllr. Dennis and Cllr. Grose approved the minutes.

237. To accept the September 2025 accounts for payment

Cllr. Dennis proposed acceptance of the accounts, seconded by Cllr. Lamb. All in favour.

238. To accept the F & G.P Detailed Receipt and Payment report ending 31st August 2025

Cllr. Dennis queried why under nominal 4330, Hall Hire, £25 had been transfer to/from an EMR. The Clerk to investigate and report at the next meeting.

All agreed to accept the report.

239. To accept the bank reconciliation ending 31st August 2025

The Clerk explained that the £100 adjustment shown on the report was due to an overpayment to Screwfix, which has now been refunded to the Council. Agreed by all to accept the bank reconciliation.

240. To review and approve the solicitor's charges for acting on behalf of the Council in the transfer of land at Pilgrim Drive

The Clerk detailed the quote received from the Solicitor currently acting on behalf of the Council to facilitate the transfer of the piece of land at Bedford Villas. After discussion, it was agreed by all to approve the quote and instruct the Solicitor to act on behalf of the Council.

241. Update on the replacement of the Parish Hall's doors

Cllr. Dennis reported that he, Cllr. Leithall and Cllr. Crozier had met to review all quotes received. Following this, they agreed to approve the installation of glass doors at a cost of £10,000. The new doors will include automatic opening. It was noted that the existing internal wooden door will remain in place.

Cllr. Dennis confirmed that a grant application of £25,000 has been submitted to West Devon Borough Council to cover the costs of the new doors, new guttering, and internal maintenance works. West Devon were originally to have decided on funding in August, but due to the high volume of applications, the decision has been delayed until October.

Cllr. Dennis also stated that the glass annex door has been repaired and the cost covered by Beregen.

242. Discuss ongoing issue of parking in the Parish Hall carpark

The Clerk reported that letters had been placed on vans parked in the Parish Hall car park a few weeks ago, and that at least one van has since been moved.

It was noted that the car park is intended for users of the Parish Hall as well as people shopping on Fore Street. The Council allows overnight parking after 8 pm.

Cllr. Dennis noted that longer vehicles sometimes obstruct pedestrian pathways, and that bookings for the Parish Hall had been lost because people were reluctant to book due to parking issues.

Cllr. Leithall, not present at the meeting, had emailed Councillors giving details on what the Parish Council can do to enforce car parking rules.

Cllr. Lamb highlighted that the Council has been discussing this issue for over two years and emphasised the need for a clear parking policy. He has drafted a new letter to be distributed to all residents and asked the Clerk to seek legal advice from DALC regarding enforcement in the car park.

Discussions were held on the wording of the draft letter regarding the car park. After suggested amendments, Cllr. Lamb proposed that the letter be recommended to Full Council for approval and then distributed to all residents via Berelink, social media, and the Council website. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Grose.

243. Approve purchase of hedge trimmer

After discussions, all agreed to approve the purchase.

244. Approve pay rise for the Clerk and Workman and be back dated from 1st April 2025. To be taken into Part 2

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, followed by the Parish Council, has agreed on pay rates applicable from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The new pay rates are each increased by 3.20 per cent per annum. All agreed to approve the pay rise and it be back dated to 1st April 2025.

245. Correspondence

1. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner are seeking Expressions of Interest from local parish town councils and voluntary sector organisations across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly who are seeking financial support to install or upgrade CCTV systems. Please note the following conditions of this funding:
 - Total funding available is £125,000, a maximum amount of £10,000 can be requested per town or parish council, to pay for CCTV equipment and infrastructure only
 - We can only accept one application from a Town or Parish council.
 - This is non-recurrent funding, OPCC will not be responsible for ongoing maintenance or monitoring costs.
 - OPCC will only match fund – the local council needs to be the primary funder.The Clerk to seek quotes and submit an application.

2. The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from the Land Registry regarding the amended registration of the Parish Hall. The letter stated that the application could not be processed and outlined the reasons for this, along with instructions on how to rectify the issues. Cllr. Dennis to look into it.

3.

246. Agenda items for the next meeting

1. List of desired capital items for future projects.

247. Questions from the public, at the discretion of the Chair

A member of the public asked about ownership of the land surrounding the Parish Hall. It was clarified that the Council owns the land around the Hall. The Doctors' Surgery owns the land on which their building and car park sit, although the Council retains four parking spaces for use. The Victoria Social Club has access to four spaces in the main car park.

The member of the public also requested clarification regarding the Parish Hall doors. It was explained that, due to health and safety regulations, the annex glass door has recently been modified. The proposed new doors for the Parish Hall will be glass, while the internal wooden doors will remain in place.

Cllr. Lamb reminded all present that a service for the New Zealander soldiers will be held tomorrow, Wednesday 24th September, at 11 am at the War Memorial.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for attending the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed by the Chair

Dated 30th September 2025